

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application in light of the present amendment and remarks is respectfully requested. In the present response, claims 1-4, 6-8, and 10-14 have been canceled, and claims 5 and 9 have been amended. Claims 5 and 9 remain pending in this application.

Formal matters

Figure 1 has been objected to because it does not include an appropriate "Prior Art" designation. In response, Applicant has amended Figure 1 to include the designation "-- Prior Art --." A replacement sheet incorporating this change is attached herein.

Examiner has asserted an objection to the specification on the grounds that "it seems like the application is a direct translation from a foreign application." Examiner has suggested that Applicant should make appropriate changes to the language in order to bring it into conformance with proper idiomatic English. As Examiner has not identified any specific passages in the specification which are objectionable or unacceptable in this regard, Applicant respectfully requests that any objections to the language of the specification be held in abeyance pending resolution of the other outstanding matters concerning this application.

Claims 1-14 have been rejected under 35 USC 112(2) as being indefinite. In this regard, Examiner has pointed out specific objectionable language in claims 1, 3, 9, 11, 13.

The formal objections/rejections to claims 1-4, 6-8, and 10-14 are moot in view of Applicant's cancellation of those claims. For claims 5 and 9, Applicant's present amendments to those claims (described in further detail below) address all pertinent formal problems cited by Examiner. Moreover, to the extent that Applicant's amendments to claims 5 and 9 incorporate language that was originally present in claims 1 and 3, any formal objections to the language that

was originally present in claims 1 and 3 are addressed by Applicant's amendments herein (described in further detail below).

Substantive matters

Claims 1-4, 6-8, 10, and 12-14 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Sugita (U.S. Patent 6,054,815). These rejections are moot in view of Applicant's cancellation of those claims.

Claim 11 has been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious over Sugita (U.S. Patent 6,054,815) in view of Applicant's admitted prior art (in Figure 1). This rejection is moot in view of Applicant's cancellation of claim 11.

Claims 5 and 9 have been indicated as having allowable subject matter. More specifically, claims 5 and 9 have been indicated to be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 USC 112(2) and to include all limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims. In response, claims 5 and 9 have been recast in independent form to include the substantive limitations of their respective base claims and any intervening claims, as well as to cure any objectionable language in their respective base claims and intervening claims. More specifically:

(i) Claim 5 has been recast in independent form to include the substantive structural limitations of claims 1, 3, and 4. In amending claim 5, Applicant has attempted to eliminate any confusing functional language cited by Examiner, and to place the claim in a form that more clearly recites the underlying structure. It is believed that claim 5, as amended, is now in compliance with all formal requirements and in a condition for allowance.

(ii) Claim 9 has been recast in independent form to include the substantive structural limitations of claims 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6. In amending claim 9, Applicant has attempted to eliminate any confusing functional language cited by Examiner, and to place the claim in a form

that more clearly recites the underlying structure and in which proper antecedent basis is provided for the claim recitations (for the latter reason, Applicant has incorporated the substantive structural limitations of claims 2, 3, and 4). It is believed that claim 9, as amended, is now in compliance with all formal requirements and is in a condition for allowance.

Thus, claims 5 and 9 are now believed to be in a condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, passing of this case is now in order. Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's agent by telephone if such communication may be helpful in the further examination of this case. A Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

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(Date of Deposit)

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Kenneth D. Labudda 10 May 2006
Signature Date

Respectfully submitted,

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